



# THE UNITED STATES CADET NURSE CORPS

Support Our Valiant Sisters in their Final Battle:  
To Be Recognized with Official Veteran Status



During and just after World War II, over a hundred thousand women served in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps, yet their contributions remain virtually unknown. Other women who have been in WWII military services, like the Women's Army Corps (WAC), the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), and the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), have rightfully been granted veteran status and benefits - and remain legendary to this day. Because the Cadet Nurses were under the Public Health Service rather than a military command, and performed their duties in this country as well as abroad, their services during and shortly after the war have gone unrecognized. It's time to include and salute them as veterans.

In a show of support for the integral role that the women of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps played during World War II, Congresswoman Nita M. Lowey (D-NY) has introduced H.R. 3423, the United States Cadet Nurse Corps Equity Act, to classify service in the Cadet Nurse Corps as active military service and to recognize the members as veterans. The act requires the Secretary of Defense to issue an honorable discharge to each person whose service qualifies for one. This change in status would give Cadet Nurse Corps members access to services administered by both Federal and State Veterans' Affairs departments.

Over the past decade, numerous United States Cadet Nurse Corps Equity Acts have been introduced and sent to committees where they were left to languish. There has never been a hearing, no bill has ever reached the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote and there is no Senate counterpart. Cadet Nurses and their families have waited too long, too quietly, and too patiently for Congress to do the right thing. 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the graduation of the last class of United States Cadet Nurses, and the small, hearty band of surviving Cadet Nurses deserves our support!

**TAKE ACTION NOW** – ask your Representative to sponsor this bill!

## BACKGROUND

In 1943, the Federal government established the United States Cadet Nurse Corps to remedy a shortage of nurses during World War II. The 180,000 enlisted women of the Cadet Nurse Corps comprised the largest, youngest group of uniformed women to serve their country during World War II and the early postwar years (1943-1948). The recruits included various ethnic groups, including African American, Native American, and Japanese American women.

Women qualified for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps if they were between the ages of 17 and 35 and had a high-school degree from an accredited school. After acceptance into the Cadet Nurse Corps, qualified applicants were given scholarships that covered tuition, books, uniforms, partial room and board, and a small monthly stipend. In return, Cadet Nurses pledged to actively serve in essential civilian, military or other Federal and governmental services for the duration of the war. Cadet Nurses went on to serve in a wide variety of settings within the Federal Service, working for the Army, Navy, Veterans' Administration, United States Public Health Service, and the Office of Indian Affairs, and compromised 80% of the nursing staff for civilian hospitals during the war.